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Oral History Project of Colton, CA - 11/14/13

Dr. Rivera: Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Tom Rivera, and I'm the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Emeritus. Emeritus means that I've been retired for a couple of years. Today is November 14th, and it's approximately 1:30 in the afternoon, and we have some guests with us this afternoon. Our [guests are:] Mr. Ernie Colunga, Mr. Albert Félix, Mr. Rudy Luna, Dr. Luis Gómez, and Mr. Frank Gonzales.

[This afternoon,] we will be talking about scouting in South Colton in the 1950s. We will talk about our troop 45 that we grew up with.

Guys, that was 60 years ago when we were Boy Scouts; isn't that something? 60 years ago was a heck-of-a long time... [To talk] about our troop 45, let's kick it off: Let me ask you some questions to possibly stir and bring some memories back to the early 50s.

First of all, tell us: when did you first join the Boy Scouts? And why did you join the Boy Scouts? Secondly, what were your experiences like being a Boy Scout? And thirdly, how much impact did that scouting experience have on your life? For example, in my case, [during] 50, 51, 52 – I joined the Boy Scouts because my friends were in the Boy Scouts and they were going to the Boy Scouts and having meetings.

Rudy, I do not remember where we had our meetings – do you remember where we had our meetings?

Mr. Luna: Wilson

Dr. Rivera: At Wilson?

Mr. Colunga: In the bungalows...

Dr. Gómez: In the bungalows, in the last one...

Mr. Félix: In the music room.

Mr. Luna: Music room, yeah, that's true.

Dr. Rivera: We had our meetings at the old Garfield School, and also the Wilson Junior High School. Where were we, at the bungalows?

Mr. Luna: Yeah, one bungalow...

Dr. Rivera: At the far end of the school?

(They all agree that it's the bungalow at the far end...)

Mr. Luna: (He shows us with his hands). Remember, the bungalow was here and the classroom was here, and Mr. Hosea was the last one at that end, and the music room was over here on the side.

Dr. Rivera: So we had to buy gray level, eh?

Dr. Gómez: Yes, as I recall, I think we had kindergarten, then they were going east – [and there was] 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade. I think the last one was 5th grade.

Dr. Rivera: That was our class... Mr. Hosea, yeah...

(They all agree...)

Mr. Luna: I remember that almost all of us were in the same club with almost all the same classes together, like me and you. (He points to Dr. Rivera).

Dr. Rivera: Yeah.

Mr. Luna: And him (he points at Mr. Félix...) and Willie... We all went to the same classes from actually kindergarten all the way through junior high. And the junior high at Wilson we changed it because they started messing us around, moving us around. Then, when we went to Roosevelt they moved us again, and then they finally put us all at Colton Junior High.

Dr. Rivera: Well getting back to the Boy Scouts, Ernie.

Mr. Colunga: Yes.

Dr. Rivera: I remember when we went to the Boy Scouts, the senior Boy Scout member was Ernie Colunga. Ernie, how did you get involved with the Boys Scouts?

Mr. Colunga: When I was in the 6th grade I was 11 years old; and my compadre, Charlie Sierra, was joining and so was his older brother, Chapo. So they asked me to go with them [because] it was great: we went hiking, and he showed us different things [like] survival tactics and how to live off the land, and so on and so forth. So it sounded interesting to me so I joined at 11. I was in Ms. Castorena's 6th grade class, I remember. It was the first year we went to junior high because junior high was 6th, 7th, and 8th [grades]. And so we started attending the meetings; [it was] very interesting, you had to become a tenderfoot [to] meet those requirements, which was loaded with learning those Boy Scout oaths and Boy Scout laws, primarily. Then that expanded from tenderfoot to second class, first class, star scout, life scout, and then eagle.

Dr. Rivera: Were you an eagle?

Mr. Colunga: I never made it. I only needed about four more merit badges. When I started going to San Bernardino Valley College my workload there was too heavy, man –for me to keep up with it. I should have finished, I should have gotten my eagle rank. I would have been the first one in Troop 45, but my work load at Valley College was just too heavy.

Dr. Rivera: Well, you-know, Ernie was quite a role model in the Boy Scouts, wasn't he? We saw him as one of the leaders of the Boy Scouts, we all wanted to be like Ernie, and be Boy Scout leaders like Ernie. But I don't think I ever passed tenderfoot, Ernie.
(Laughter)

Mr. Luna: When I joined he was already... (inaudible)... it was Ray, (inaudible) and then Ernie. Because he was the one that used to tell us to get up and all that.

Dr. Rivera: Rudy, how old were you when you joined the Boy Scouts?

Mr. Luna: Hey, I really don't remember—to tell you the truth, Tom.

Mr. Colunga: He had to be 11 years old.

(They all agree...)

Mr. Luna: Because Hosea was right there and we were in the same boat. And-like-I-said, we were all almost about the same age, and that was the “in” thing for us. Because like Ernie just said, we used to go out to do things. Ray was such... I've always admired the man. He was one of the most creative persons I've ever met in my life.

Dr. Rivera: Rudy, you mentioned Saul, who was Saul?

Mr. Luna: (Rudy points to Ernie).

Mr. Colunga: (Inaudible) He was the leader; he was the senior patrol leader when I joined.

Mr. Félix: Yeah, patrol leader.

Mr. Colunga: He was above all 4 patrols; we had 4 patrols in the troop... He was the head of all the patrols.

Dr. Gómez: Did he become assistant scout master?

Mr. Colunga: No, he didn't want to take it... it was too much for him.

Dr. Rivera: So that was Saul, Rudy? Saul was one of the leaders that was there when we joined the Boy Scouts?

Mr. Luna: He was the one – when Ray used to take us out to South Colton to the Santa Ana River...

Mr. Félix: To the mighty Santa Ana River?

Mr. Luna: And then, when we used to come up here to the mountains – it was like we were in control. Because I remember one time we came up here with Ray Abril, and we were all in his truck and all of a sudden Ray stopped and Saul and the senior guys got off and they all ran. We didn't know what the problem was—we didn't know what was happening. So they ran and we found out why they ran – because over here in the San Bernardino Mountains they had cabins; and they went and got the cabins because they were overnight – and we were the ones who had to sleep outside.

(Laughter)

Mr. Luna: Saul knew how to do it; I mean, he knew the *movida*.

Mr. Félix: He wasn't no dummy...

(Laughter)

Dr. Rivera: Now getting back to – how did the troop start? How did troop 45 start?

Mr. Luna: I really don't know about that.

Dr. Rivera: How did it start, Ernie?

Mr. Colunga: I have a history here someplace. It was run by a Mr. Ross. In 1942 he was drafted to go into World War II to serve, and Ray took over the troop then, in 1942. I don't know how old he was... you have to do the math because he died when he was

93. So if you do the math, evidently... I think he was married by that time; and maybe had 1 or 2 kids. 1942, you figure that's a long time.

Dr. Rivera: Well... Ray Abril, Jr. was born in 1932, I think, so yeah...

Mr. Colunga: So anyway, Ray took it over and started recruiting the boys from South Colton, and back then we had a sponsor, we were sponsored by the rotaries. I remember I did a drawing of a pup tent with the troop flag over it and it had a ribbon on there [with the saying:] The Rotary Club...
But like we said earlier, we used to meet in the music room bungalow at Garfield, and we'd meet once a week.

Dr. Rivera: What time was it? Luis, do you remember?

Dr. Gómez: About 5 or 6 o'clock...

Dr. Rivera: And how long were the meetings, Luis?

Dr. Gómez: About an hour or an hour and a half, maybe a couple of hours. Sometimes we had those raids out there in the Santa Ana River, you-know, 2 teams...

Mr. Colunga: The weenie bakes...

Dr. Gómez: Yeah, we'd have the weenie bakes out there in the Santa Ana River at night – it was pretty neat.

But when we had the contest, you-know, stealing the flag – we'd form 2 battalions, 2 opposing battalions at night at the Santa Ana River. Yeah, and the object was to steal the flag, you-know, whoever would get the flag were the winners

Dr. Rivera: What did we call that game?

Mr. Félix: ‘Pigs-come-over-the-hill’...

Dr. Rivera: ‘Pigs-come-over-the-hill’...

(Laughter)

Dr. Rivera: Getting back to the meetings. What did we do at the meetings?

Dr. Gómez: Well, to me they seemed kind of formal because it’s kind-a like the military, in sense. Of course, I’ve never had any experience there in the military prior to that time. But they would bring the meeting to order, and discuss the badges, especially to the beginners, like myself. [They would tell us about] how to become a tenderfoot, what the regulations [were], what the qualifications [were], and so on. [Also] the things you had to study, and all that. We would sing songs, the kind of patriotic songs like: “Viva la compagnie”, and “Alouette”... [we’d] learn stuff like that. At the same time we would also learn knot tying, we had contests – remember the contests we used to have?

Mr. Félix: The one that had 2 loops...

Dr. Gómez: Yeah, that was a ‘ship-shank’. Anyway, those kinds of things... And we talked about different regulations, and what we had to do, and do some assessments as I recall. [For example, they’d tell you,] you still have to do this, you-know, ok.

Mr. Colunga: We discussed upcoming activities...

(Inaudible – 2 or 3 talking at the same time)

Mr. Gonzales: Courts of Honor.

Dr. Rivera: Ernie, we had a song, we had a Boy Scout song, who wrote that song?

Mr. Colunga: It was written by Manuel Padilla; he’s an old pioneer of South Colton, and he wrote this for the troop.

You guys didn’t know we had a song... can I read it?

Dr. Rivera: Sure, I would prefer that you sing it, but if you can't sing it...

Mr. Colunga: Naw, I can't carry a tune in a bucket, man.

(Laughter)

Mr. Colunga: (He reads the lyrics) We're the Boy Scouts of America, with pride we salute our flag. We are always smiling for our life is grand. We pledge our lives to a good deed everyday. Our motto is, be prepared, our scout laws lead the way. We're the Boy Scouts of America, loyal and true to our country, to our God, our country and you. This was written by a local pioneer [who] was affiliated with the Boy Scouts in the beginning; and he wrote that for us. We'd sing it every once in a while but it finally died out. Some of you guys were there – remember...?

Dr. Gómez: What was his name?

Mr. Colunga: Manuel Padilla, he was a councilman in Colton.

Dr. Rivera: He was very active in the community... I think he was President of the *Progresistas*, he was very involved with the Congress of Community Clubs, and he was also very involved in social issues that we had in South Colton.

Mr. Luna: He was a member of the Hod Carriers Union here in San Bernardino...

Mr. Gonzales: He was a union rep – wasn't he?

Dr. Rivera: He was a union secretary for many years, yeah.

Now, we've talked about Ray Abril, we've mentioned Ray Abril several times – who was Ray Abril? He was our Scoutmaster for many years...

Mr. Colunga: He was a surrogate father for a lot of us guys because our Dads were off working or drinking, or whatever. They didn't take care of our day-to-day things like Ray

did for us. By following the Scout laws, it was a very good guide to live by. Ray made sure that we lived up to those Scout laws...

Mr. Félix: By example...

Mr. Luna: I have to agree 100% with you on that.

Mr. Colunga: And he always had time for us to the point that his wife would get angry at him, you-know.

(Laughter)

Dr. Gómez: Nelly.

Mr. Colunga: Nelly.

I remember once, Saul, our senior patrol leader went over there looking for Ray, and she (Nelly) said she was throwing rocks at him.

(Laughter)

Mr. Colunga: Sal laughed and left; and I just laughed at that...

Dr. Rivera: Did Ray have a family?

Mr. Colunga: Oh-yes, he had 3 boys: Ray Abril, Jr., Don, and Dickie, and he had a daughter by the name of Linda. She's the only one [who] survives to this day now. They've all passed away.

Dr. Rivera: Where did he live Ernie?

Mr. Colunga: He lived on 'N' Street.

Dr. Rivera: There in South Colton?

Mr. Colunga: In South Colton...

Mr. Félix: His house is still there?

Mr. Colunga: I'll never forget that address: 330 East 'N' Street in South Colton. I think Sonny Abril, Ray Abril, Jr.'s son still lives there. Because after Ray, Sr. passed away, Ray Abril, Jr. moved into the house and brought up his family there.

Mr. Luna: Who got the house, the other house? The one over by the high school.

Mr. Colunga: His wife, his second wife.

Mr. Luna: We used to go over there and talk to him once in a while; and there was always this guy with him, he was an Italiano, and he always had a jug...

(Laughter)

Mr. Luna: (Inaudible) actually. And we used to go once in a while just to help make his life miserable because, you-know, we were younger. His [friend] was always offering us wine and we always looked at him and we looked at Ray and said: No thank you. You-know, like you said, he was a father image to us – you had to respect him. I don't think there was a guy in the troops that didn't respect him. I never heard anybody talk about him – not even afterwards.

Mr. Colunga: You know that house there on 'F' Street—that's the one you're talking about, right? Well, that was an empty lot, [and when] I was 14 years old, I drew up the blueprints for his house.

Mr. Luna: Oh-yeah?

Mr. Colunga: Yeah, I was 14 years old and I got a merit badge out of it—and that was it... I did the floor plans for it...

(Laughter)

Mr. Colunga: They took [the blueprints] downtown to get them passed and they passed, no problem. The only thing they needed was the exact location, where the lot was... so I had to print that in later on. But I took 3 years of architectural drawing.

Dr. Rivera: Was Ray's position as a Scoutmaster completely volunteer? Or was it something he was paid for by the city...?

Dr. Gómez: I think it was all volunteer. He worked for the school district, as I recall; he was a painter.

Mr. Luna: Yeah, he was a painter...

Dr. Gómez: And he was always on the go...

When I joined, I thought, wow! I know this person. Anyway, I proceeded through my endeavors... you-know, he really was a father figure. He was a counselor, he was a teacher, he guided us in many ways, and all positive, all positive. He didn't coddle us... I think he regarded us as his kids.

Mr. Félix: I believe he did what he had to do to help us straighten out.

Mr. Colunga: That's what he used to say to us all the time: those are my boys.
("Yeah" – is said in unison...)

Dr. Rivera: (He asks Manny, the cameraman, to zoom in on a drawing of Ray Abril, Sr. and members of the Boy Scouts... Mr. Colunga points out who the members are in the drawing).

Mr. Colunga: Okay, that's Ray Abril, Sr., that's the way he looked, he was a big, tall, barrel-chested big man. And then, some of these guys that I drew in here [are:] Richard Mendoza, Tony Arcy, Beto Salazar, Shaboon, Saul (Sal) Doran, our leader, that's Hulé, what was his real name? Manuel Saucedo, David Ramirez, Gunnar... and that's Becky,

his brother—he had a big smile with a lot of teeth like that. That's Joe Ayala over here, and I forget who the other ones are... And Saul was very handsome, remember that? Saul Doran?

Mr. Luna: You've got a good memory... Is he (Saul) still around?

Mr. Colunga: Yeah. He lives on Rancho.

Dr. Rivera: I tried to get ahold of him Rudy, and I just couldn't get hold him. Over the years we had more people that participated...

Mr. Luna: I'll tell you a little story about Hulé. We came up here to (inaudible) one of the camps up here, and Hulé was a very heavy person, you-know, that's why they called him Hulé. Anyway, we came up there and then Ray said, some of you guys go up and climb the mountains. And some of us got together, it was about 5 or 6 of us that went. And [with] Hulé, nobody wanted to actually hang around with him because he was too heavy; but he came with us. And we couldn't figure out how to get him from one place to another because he was very heavy. I can't remember the guys who were there with us. But anyway, they went and got a rope and tied it around him, and we started pulling him up the mountain. We went about, I think it was about, maybe about 40 yards [and we said,] forget about this – we ain't climbing no more, and we all came back down.

(Laughter)

Mr. Luna: But we never told him... he was chunky.

Dr. Gómez: What I remember about Hulé is when we had the contest, the knot tying contest, man! He was the best! (He motions with his hands the tying of a knot, quickly) Done! He was really fast...

Mr. Colunga: Guess who taught him?

(Laughter)

Mr. Colunga: I got some pictures in here, I'll show you guys later... About me teaching the guys first aid when we were at camp (inaudible).

Mr. Félix: Speaking about that one, I remember Bibi Chavez and (inaudible), Charlie Sierra... it was a lake, I think it was Jenke's Lake – it was frozen and in the middle of the place was water and they wanted to go swimming – they were dead set on going swimming. They stripped down to their shorts, got in, and both Charlie and Bibi Chavez went into the freezing water

Mr. Colunga: I got a picture of that...

Mr. Félix: Aye, yai, yai! They were loco...

Dr. Rivera: You-know, Albert, talking about going camping and just doing different things with Ray, how did he transport us to these different activities? What did he have?

Colunga, Félix, Gómez, Gonzales & Luna: (in unison) - A pickup truck... a GMC...

Dr. Rivera: A GMC, what year?

Mr. Félix: About 53, 54...

Dr. Rivera: 53, 54 GMC?

Colunga, Félix, Gómez, Gonzales & Luna: (in unison) – Yeah!

Dr. Rivera: And he would crowd us all in?

Colunga, Félix, Gómez, Gonzales & Luna: (in unison) - All the time... put us all in there...

Dr. Gómez: ... And we were freezing back there...

Mr. Luna: Getting back to how he transported us: a lot of times we were packed like sardines. If a cop had ever stopped us he would have given Ray a ticket. A lot of times we were going up the mountains...

Mr. Félix: Whoa, whoa – when he was transporting us to go camping – that’s when we would have gotten in trouble.

Dr. Rivera: He was packing the scouts plus...

Mr. Félix: All our gear... it was really a hassle then...

Dr. Gómez: But that was before the law...

Mr. Félix: Well good thing because if that law had been enforced... poor Ray would have been in trouble.

Mr. Colunga: (He holds up a photograph) - In this picture there are 12 of us; he got all 12 of us in the back of that pickup, plus our sleeping bags, plus our tents...

Mr. Félix: All our goodies... everything.

Mr. Colunga: He transported us in that little... the truck is in the back – I don’t know if you can see it.

Dr. Rivera: Besides that, we talked about some of the things Ray encouraged us to do. One of the things was he also organized us as a baseball/softball team, and basketball team. We would go and play against San Bernardino, the Home of Neighborly Service...

Mr. Luna: It's still there...

Dr. Rivera: Do you remember that AI?

Mr. Félix: Oh-yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Rivera: What impact did that have on you, AI? Coaching and being part of the team that went to the Home of Neighborly Service.

Mr. Félix: I believe you want to belong to a team; you want to be with your buddies; you want to be with your friends... He's getting together a team, he's looking for players – you wanna go play? Go sign up—that's all you had to do. Show up, sign up – let's go! Boom! No regulations and all this [stuff about having to be] 7 feet tall and all this stuff...

Mr. Luna: Elgin Baylor and all that...

Mr. Félix: [You didn't have to] pitch a ball 90 miles an hour and all that stuff. Man! It was just about having a good time.

Well, it first started here at Veterans Park, of course – everything was there.

Dr. Rivera: Veterans Park was in South Colton?

Mr. Colunga: South Colton, yeah.

Mr. Félix: Veterans Park, right... everything started right there, everything.

Dr. Rivera: With his little pickup he would prepare the field, the infield; drag it, and we would help him; and then we would have a little team.

You were the catcher, Albert, yeah; Rudy, you pitched, *verdad*?

Mr. Luna: Yeah, me and Tony Arcy.

Mr. Félix: Sometimes I [thought] Tony was gonna break his arm [because] he would throw [a flat ball], remember? He was skinny, skinny...

Mr. Luna: I talked to some guys that I used to work with at this other company, and one of the guys one time – he came up to me and asked me, he said: You're Rudy, aren't you? I said, yeah. He said, I remember you and the other guy. I [asked:] which one? He said, the long tall one... you guys were pitchers. He said, I remember you, you used to pitch pretty fast, but the other guy had such a windup and he threw so slow we couldn't figure out why he was throwing so slow... Tony was this big tall guy with this big windup and he would throw it so slow...

(Laughter)

Mr. Félix: That was his change-up...that was his only windup and his only pitch.

(Laughter)

Dr. Rivera: Albert, we talked about Ray being a good role model, a hero, and a father image – and you mentioned that you tried to emulate him.

Mr. Félix: I remember him.

When my girls wanted to start playing softball, I said, okay, I'll go sign you up. So Elizabeth Davis had just opened up that girls ballpark at the north park over there. As a matter of fact, the mayor of Colton was the one that originated the girls softball thing... Carl Rimbaugh... Well anyway, my girls wanted to play softball and I took them down to go sign up at the Rimbaugh, and a bunch of their friends were there, and other guys were already there who supposedly had teams. I just started hanging around to check out to see if these guys knew anything about ball because I didn't want to leave my kids just there. They're [going to be on a team] but are they going to be taught anything – that was my new main thing. If you're gonna play ball I want you to be taught right... So I stayed around and they drafted teams and all this stuff, and [they] started having practices, and I kept going to these so-called practices – and to me they were a joke. All they had these girls do was throw the ball back-n-forth. I asked one of the guys that

was supposed to be a coach: What are the kids learning by throwing the ball back and forth? [He said:] Well I don't know, everybody else is doing it so I just have them do it too. I said: No, no, no, no – some of these girls don't know what a baseball glove. You gotta show them where it belongs, on what hand, how to use it, how to catch the ball, how to get the ball with the other hand and throw it, you gotta start from scratch, you just don't... start throwing the ball back-n-forth and run to the base and all that stuff. It was crazy! So there were people [who] were running the league that I knew from football because I was already involved with the football program. [They said,] I know what you mean, Al, this is no good for the league. Why don't you stick around and help? [I said,] no, no, no, no... I just wanna do my job and sign my kids up, but I didn't want to sign them up and leave them and have nobody to teach them anything. If they're gonna play ball, they're gonna have to learn how to play ball, first. [He replied,] oh-okay, okay, well anyways, that went on until the people that were running the league talked me into getting involved with the league so I could help them get organized [as a] team. Start from step one, step two, and so on, and so on. So I did that and everything went fine. So I stayed there for 23 years with the girls softball, and it was great! There were some super girl athletes through that program.

Dr. Rivera: Besides that, my take on that, Al, is that Ray Abril had a tremendous influence in your life in terms of giving back to the community and the giving of yourself and coaching for that many years; and altogether, I think you coached about 40 years in Colton.

Mr. Félix: I did...

So, after the girls softball, my kid had just become of age to go play little league, and at first he didn't want to play little league... I said, you better be sure because they're having the sign-ups right now... So when he finally decided that he wanted to play little league, he said, come on Dad take me—I want to go play little league. [We went to] Ken Hubbs and the sign-ups were closed – there were too many ballplayers. I went to the other one: Colton Terrace, Moose League, Carreon Park – same thing over there, I

couldn't get him in. Somebody suggested San Bernardino (inaudible) on 5th Street next to the pool.

Dr. Rivera: Yeah.

Mr. Félix: Yeah, right there – a brand new field had just opened up, they were just opening up a brand new league... *Vamonos*, I took them over there to play while signing up. Anyways, the same thing happened there that was going to happen with the girls. [What happened was,] the guy that was going to take over the team, he did not know jack from shinola.

Dr. Rivera: So let me go back, Al, let me go back. My point is that being involved in the Boy Scouts, being well acquainted with Ray, and having that tremendous influence that he had in your younger life – that you were able to take over, be a coach and continue being a coach for many, many years.

Do the kids that you coach, do they come and say: 'hello' and 'how are you coach?'

Mr. Félix: When I run into them out in the street... they'll come up to me and give me a friendly little bump and say: Hi coach, how you doing?

Dr. Gómez: That's good.

(Laughter)

Mr. Félix: And so help me, I remember who they are, what they played, what position they played... The girls from the Rimbaugh League over there, and the football players from the Colton Youth football from the high school... I did the same thing with them. My son wanted to play football, he really loved football; so I said, ok, you're not going to sign-up and then say you don't want to [play] because it's too rough. If you're going to sign-up you're going to go and practice, practice, and practice – and then, go out and play hard all the time. [Do] you understand me son? [He said,] Ok Dad, what if I'm tired? [I told him,] if you're tired you play tired...

(Laughter)

Mr. Félix: You get more tired by playing, but you'll get a good feeling son. He was only 9 years old – he had just turned 9; so he didn't know what the heck he wanted.

Dr. Rivera: How has scouting impacted your life?

I know in my case, going through the Scout laws, Luis, the Scout laws are what? A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

I think when I look at all our guys that Ernie has here, I think everybody followed through on their Scout laws/oath...

(Inaudible – men began talking at the same time).

Dr. Gómez: The thing that I recall going through in my life, so far, [is to] be prepared...

That took me, I think, from elementary school all the way through graduate school.

Because I always thought: I better get ready, I better make sure, let me anticipate something else. That really had an effect on me, besides the Scout laws, that one phrase 'be prepared', man! That had a tremendous impact on me.

Dr. Rivera: What about the slogan? 'Do a good turn daily' – *Tambien, verdad?*

Because I think all of us are still involved in some type of community activity. Albert [was] coaching for 40 years; you're, [Luis,] with Kiwanis and you were in education for many, many years; and, Ernie, you still keep active [with] scholarship fundraising...

Mr. Colunga: I wanted to give back to the community, which is something they didn't do for us.

(They all agree)

Dr. Rivera: Frankie, you took over the troop 45 after we were long gone.

What do you have there, Luis?

Dr. Gómez: This is the panoramic picture that was taken on May of 2003, when we paid tribute to Ray Abril, Sr., our longtime Scoutmaster. Wow!

Dr. Rivera: What day was that Luis?

Dr. Gómez: It was in May of 2003.

Dr. Rivera: May of 2003 –

Dr. Gómez: At the Radisson Hotel in San Bernardino.

Mr. Luna: I remember...

Dr. Rivera: Yeah. Were you involved with the planning, Ernie?

Anyway, the planning started in January – and we thought, yeah, we will have the banquet for Ray in May. Then we would visit Ray and say, this is where we're at with the plans, and this is what the plans are coming to. And that would keep him going. Then we went to the hospital and we were still giving him updates on the plans that we were preparing for that big banquet.

We had the banquet on a Saturday, what date, Luis?

Dr. Gómez: I don't remember the exact date...

Mr. Colunga: The 17th of May in 2003

Dr. Rivera: The 17th of May in 2003 we had a big banquet, and how many people showed up -- about 300?

(Each man agrees...)

Dr. Rivera: Over 300 people showed up... and these were all the Boy Scouts and their families. We took a picture of them and we will scan the picture and include it in this talk.

But, Ray could not make it to the banquet... because he was sick in the hospital.
Ernie, remember the next day at noon on Sunday, Ray passed away, *verdad?*

Mr. Colunga: Um-hm, he lasted that long.

Dr. Rivera: Yeah, so he lasted until the banquet was over...

Dr. Gómez: And Sonny Abril, his son, he mentioned, he said, my Dad was waiting until they had the banquet, and then...

Mr. Luna: You-know, getting back to this scout thing here... [about being] trustworthy and all this stuff, I don't think there's a person in our group, and in the Boy Scouts when we were in the Boy Scouts, I think that of all the guys – I think they all agreed with what this was because as we grew up there was no violence in South Colton. There was no...

Mr. Félix: Not that generation.

Mr. Luna: There you go — not like today, like the barrios are... I mean, when we were in the Boy Scouts, actually, we all did obey [this oath, these laws]. And as we grew older and we started getting up in years, we started going our separate ways; but the thing is that I know we never had violence because of what we had here (he holds up the list with the oath/laws). We were always together [because] Ray had us playing basketball, baseball, hiking – he was always, like what we said a little while ago, he was the guy [who] motivated everybody, and we all obey this (the list with the oath/laws) because of him. And I'm not kidding, like I said a little while ago, I've always been very grateful to him, and I used to tell Sonny about it. I said your Dad... I mean a lot of guys are here because of what Ray did.

One time actually, I don't know who I was talking to, [but] it came into my mind: I said, you know what? I could never understand why he hasn't gotten any recognition [or a memorial] for [what he's done, like] in a school, [or a] park – I'm talking about Ray, period, not Sonny, Ray.

Because what we did in the Boy Scouts, in those pictures – we have never actually paid attention to at least have a plaque, or something, but we never had because we all went our separate ways. But we're all here, we're talking right now, we're all together, and we always bring Ray back into the game. But the thing is that people outside, like Colton right now, there's nobody there anymore for us. There's only a handful of us that are there, and we know Ray, like that picture right there (he points at a picture on the table) – those are the people right there [who] knew Ray. Other than that, you say Ray Abril in South Colton – who's that? You go to the school board, who's that?

Dr. Gómez: The Arrowhead district of the Boy Scouts of America...

Dr. Rivera: We'll stop here with Luis...

(Manny mentions there's only 10 minutes of battery remaining in the video camera... but the men decided to continue talking).

Transcribed by Pat Ricé-Daniels, Library Services Specialist-1, Special Collections